

## **QUESTIONS FROM WEBCAST ON ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**September 19, 2012**

### **Will Growth peer groups change/reset annually?**

Yes. Each year, the Growth calculation will be tied to “new” peer groups.

For the Growth calculation, points are awarded for percentage of students that show typical or high rates of growth. The scale for growth would be determined at equal intervals. For elementary and middle schools, the calculation is completed for reading and mathematics where annual testing occurs (grades 3-8). Schools receive one point for each percent of students that show typical or high growth.

At high school, points are awarded for percentage of students showing growth when comparing student performance on PLAN (grade 10) to ACT (grade 11). The PLAN and ACT composite scores in reading and mathematics are used for comparison.

### **How are the annual targets being decided? Are they based on the state average or is there a timeline to reach a certain standard?**

The Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) is based on a statistical model that requires a school to have significant gain of scores over time. Technically, the AMO is based on a standard deviation, but that word is confusing for those not trained in statistics. Here’s a way to think of it.

If the state average for elementary schools is 50, and there is a standard deviation of 21, it would mean a school’s AMO would require the school to move seven points in five years. Kentucky’s accountability model requires that schools improve 1/3 of the standard deviation over a five-year period.

A more detailed example: School A has an overall score of 29 (21 points below the average of 50, or one standard deviation below the mean). School A would need to move from 29 to 36 in five years. Annually, the school would need to improve approximately 1.5 points a year. Until the state averages are computed, we won’t know the standard deviation or improvement goals needed for each school. In addition, since the system is new, we have no history that confirms or refutes whether the goals are too low or too high; however, the goals were set with knowledge of past improvement from other Kentucky testing systems. After year two of the program, the Kentucky Department of Education will study all data and make decisions about the goals.

Unlike what we’ve been accustomed to with adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB, there is no set date for specific improvement.

### **Will Growth for 2011-12 be calculated by comparing performance from the non-K-PREP tests from the 2010-11 year?**

Since Growth looks at rate of improvement, rather than a specific type of test, the calculation will be done comparing the performance of student peer groups. Data from 2010-11 and 2011-12 will be used for this first set of Growth information.

**Will we have access to the all the raw data or only selected data?**

It depends on what you mean by “raw data.” The data that will be publicly reported will include percentages of students performing at novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished levels on subject-area tests; school and district percentile ranks and overall scores; point totals for each of the achievement, gap, growth, college/career readiness and graduation rate areas; disaggregated data for all five areas; and more.

KDE does produce research data that can show scale scores for subject areas and other items; however, for public reporting, our focus is on categories, ranks and percentages related to performance.

**Would it be possible to have access to student-level data with the identities masked in some way?**

This would be available through the research data. We do not plan to provide it under the embargo.

**Can we receive the data 48 hours ahead of the release date under a strict embargo? Can you tell us the specific date the data will be released, on or off the record?**

We will provide the data at least 48 hours in advance, under embargo. We hope to be able to provide it more than 48 hours in advance.

At this point, we have not set a firm date for the public release or embargo time.

**Will KDE be able to provide examples of actual questions from the tests? This is a good way to illustrate what exactly the students are being expected to learn.**

There are released items from K-PREP and other tests posted on the KDE website:  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/administrative+resources/testing+and+reporting+/district+support/link+to+released+items/sample+assessment+items+for+k-prep.htm>

**How will you be handling the barrage of questions you are bound to get after the data is released to us? One-on-one calls? A news conference of some sort?**

We will use a mixture of one-on-one conversations (via phone, e-mail or other means) and group presentations. We are tentatively planning another webcast that would happen after the media has access to the data under embargo.

It is crucial that reporters and editors do some homework prior to receiving the data. There are many items related to the new assessment and accountability model posted on KDE’s Unbridled Learning web page:  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Commissioner+of+Education/Unbridled+Learning/>

**Realizing there is no way to directly compare these results with past results, will KDE be able to provide at least some general comparisons, such as school/district rankings? For instance, if a school or district comes in at a "needs improvement" range, will we be able to say where a school stood last year?**

There is no valid way to compare overall standings from past years to this upcoming release. This is a completely different system of categorizing schools and districts, and the variables used to make determinations are different.

One can look at things like graduation rates, college/career readiness and percentages of proficient/distinguished students in science, social studies and writing (by appropriate grades) for the past couple of years. (New academic standards are in place for reading and mathematics, so those cannot be compared.)

**Will parents need to have access to computer to view the school's report card?**

No. Schools and districts should provide printed copies to parents upon request.

**The accountability system gives each school an overall score and then calculates a percentile rank based on how that overall score compares to the other schools in the state. Is it correct that schools at the 69th percentile or below are named as "Needs Improvement?" If that is true, then does that mean that next year there will also be 69% of the schools labeled as needing improvement? Would it be possible, then, for a school to meet all of their goals but, because they are in the lowest 69% of schools in the state, they would still be named as needing improvement?**

Yes, schools at the 69<sup>th</sup> percentile or below will be in the Needs Improvement category. And yes, that cutoff point will remain in place for next year.

Schools only have one overall goal to meet – the annual measureable objective (AMO), which is tied to the overall score. The overall scores will be rank-ordered for elementary, middle and high schools, and the rank order will determine at which percentile schools are placed. A school that is in the Needs Improvement category this year will have an AMO goal to reach for next year. Depending on the school's improvement, it could move out of the Needs Improvement category next year.

**Right now the majority of the PLA (persistently low-achieving) schools are high schools. Will the bottom 5% of the high school, middle school and elementary schools become Focus Schools?**

The bottom 5% will be the current PLA schools (Priority Schools), and the Focus Schools will be those high schools with grad rates below 60% for two consecutive years and any school with low scores among gap groups. Those in the lowest 10% of gap group scores are likely to be labeled as Focus Schools.

The criteria in the statute governing the PLA schools doesn't limit the designation to middle or high schools, so elementary schools may eventually be named. It's hard to predict now what percentage they will comprise, though.

**For the Gap data, how are population groups determined? How many students will determine each group?**

The groups whose performance will be included in the overall Gap group will be:

- low-income
- racial/ethnic minorities
- special education
- Limited English proficiency

For public reporting of disaggregated data, there must be at least 10 students in a group.

**I like this line of discussion you are having about the differences between what we use to do and what we will be doing now with this new system. Can this kind of comparison be put in a written document and published on the KDE website?**

Much of this information is available in the Parent's Guide to School Accountability brochure, which is posted on KDE's Unbridled Learning page:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Commissioner+of+Education/Unbridled+Learning/>

**How are the end-of-course assessments used in calculating the achievement score for the schools?**

Student results will be reported as percentages of students performing at novice, apprentice, proficient and distinguished, just as subject-area results for the K-PREP tests will be reported. Those percentages will be used in the calculation for the points for the Achievement component.

**The commissioner stated that the high school example on Slide 8 where the total score was 57.9% would be considered proficiency because most high school have been scoring within that range. My question is related to the criteria on Slide2 where a score below 70% is Needs Improvement. Would the score of 70% or below be considered Needs Improvement regardless of the state performance?**

Remember that a school will receive both an overall score and a percentile rank. The overall score may not correlate directly with the percentile –which is why a score of 57.9% might be in the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile of all scores. It's important to note the difference between an overall score (a number, not a percentage) and a percentile ranking.

**Will the disaggregated Gap data still be published on the School Report Card so that we can see the specific gaps for specific groups?**

Yes; in fact, nearly all data will be disaggregated.